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Leza L Olson 08/29/2006 09:53:52 AM From DB/Inbox: Leza L Olson

Cable
Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 03431

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ACTION: POL
INFO: IPSC ECON DCM ADM RSO PD IMO RES CONS DAO AMB
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DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: DCM:GCRETZ
DRAFTED: ECON:BMASILKO
CLEARED: ECON: WWEINSTEIN, POL: NOLSEN

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INFO RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 4332

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 003431

SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/2016
TAGS: [POL](#) [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [LE](#) [IR](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: (C) STEINITZ'S MEETING WITH CODEL SHAYS: URGES
ACTION ON IRAN

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Gene A. Cretz for reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: In a August 17 meeting with Codel Shays, Likud Knesset member Yuval Steinitz expressed disappointment with the GOI handling of the recent conflict in Lebanon. Steinitz holds the Lebanese government responsible for neither stopping Hizballah nor offering to intervene when only southern Lebanon was under Israeli bombardment. He described daily threatening TV broadcasts from Syria as evidence of the "Iranian interest." Steinitz said that Iran wants not only to destroy Israel, but also to become a world nuclear superpower. Comparing the Iranian leader to Hitler, Steinitz urged the U.S. to use brute force in dealing with Iran. End summary.

12. (C) In an August 17 meeting, Steinitz told Codel Shays that since the founding of the State of Israel, GOI military strategy has been to immediately move fighting onto enemy territory in order to defend civilian centers. Steinitz explained that since the territory of Israel is small, this is the only viable defensive option, and that in the recent conflict the government failed to follow this rule. Steinitz added that it was airpower from the IAF that inflicted the most damage in Lebanon, destroying Hizballah intelligence centers, headquarters and infrastructure. Steinitz claimed that the entire Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee of the Knesset shares his view that it should not have taken the government four weeks of daily bombardment of one-third of the country before the IDF entered Lebanon. While conceding that a ground invasion would have resulted in more IDF casualties, Steinitz said that it would have reduced civilian casualties and economic damage.

13. (C) Steinitz said that Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora is strong enough to fight Hizballah if he decides that it is a priority. Steinitz made clear that he holds the Lebanese

government responsible for the hostilities ignited by Hizballah, because "they did nothing to try to stop them, and they did nothing when Israel was only bombing the south (of Lebanon)." He cautioned that resupply of arms to Hizballah will be the test of UNSCR 1701, and pointed out ruefully that the resupply of arms was also prohibited under UNSCR 1559.

¶4. (C) Turning to the emerging threat from Syria, Steinitz asserted that Syrian forces are at the highest state of alert for a possible conflict with Israel. Daily barrages of anti-Israel messages by Syrian President Assad are broadcast on Syrian TV. Hypothesizing that this might all be an expression of what he said is the Iranian interest to unite the Arab world under an umbrella of anti-Israel sentiment, Steinitz declared that Iranian hegemony in the Arab world would lead to conflagration.

¶5. (C) Describing Iranian mid- and long-range missile capabilities, Steinitz argued that Israel is clearly Iran's first target, but that Iran's real desire is regional hegemony and to be a world nuclear superpower. Steinitz assessed that U.S. forces in Iraq serve as a potential restraint on Iranian ambitions. Steinitz urged the U.S. to find "a big stick and wave it strongly in their (Iran's) face." Steinitz predicted that this is the only hope to turn Iran into Libya, and to convince the Iranian leadership to surrender its nuclear program. He urged use of brute force in dealing with Iran because "with such countries the stick works better than the carrot." Steinitz compared Ahmadinejad to Hitler and said that the solution is "dealing with him while he is still building his forces."

¶6. (U) Codel Shays was not able to clear this message before departure.

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JONES